IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 36, 40, 44 and 48 to 50 as follows. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. to 35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) A data processing apparatus having a printer driver for generating print data in accordance with a print request issued by an application program assigning the generated print data to one of a plurality of image output apparatuses and that communicates with the plurality of image output apparatuses via a network, said data processing apparatus comprising:

limiting means for limiting selection conditions of functions provided by the plurality of image output apparatuses, which are associated with printing and capable of being designated by an operator, within a range so defined that at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses satisfies a selection condition that can be designated by the operator among the limited selection conditions, the range being represented by a sum of the functions ~~each~~ provided by ~~at least~~ each respective one of the plurality of image output apparatuses on the network;

control means for controlling a display device to display the selection conditions limited by said limiting means in a form such that the operator can designate a desired selection condition; and

constructing means for constructing, within the data processing apparatus, a plurality of logical interfaces, for transmitting the print data directly to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses via the network, each of the plurality of logical interfaces

respectively corresponding to the plurality of image output apparatuses, wherein the generated print data is assigned to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses that is selected based on a selection condition designated by the operator and information which is stored in advance and which indicates print functions of the plurality of image output apparatuses.

37. (Previously Presented) The data processing apparatuses according to Claim 36, further comprising:

generating means for generating a plurality of lists in a case where a plurality of selection conditions are designated by the operator, the plurality of lists respectively corresponding to the plurality of designated selection conditions and each of the lists including one or more image output apparatuses satisfying the corresponding selection condition; and

selecting means for selecting an image output apparatus satisfying the plurality of designated selection conditions based on the plurality of lists generated by said generating means.

38. (Previously Presented) The data processing apparatus according to Claim 36, further comprising:

message display means for displaying a message asking the operator to designate a desired selection condition;

acquiring means for acquiring job control data from each of the plurality of image output apparatuses in a case where a selection condition designated by the operator

designates to select an image output apparatus which completes an assigned print job in a shortest time;

predicting means for predicting, for each of the plurality of image output apparatuses, a time required to complete a print job assigned thereto;

selecting means for selecting an image output apparatus which will complete an assigned print job in a shortest time based on the prediction result obtained by the predicting means; and

window generating means for generating a window showing a list of print-wait times with respect to each print job which has been assigned to the image output apparatus selected by the selecting means.

39. (Previously Presented) The data processing apparatus according to Claim 36, further comprising:

assigning means for assigning a print job, including the print data, to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses based on the selection condition designated by the operator;

converting means for converting the print data to conform to the image output apparatus to which the print job is assigned by said assigning means; and

transmitting means for transmitting the print data converted by said converting means to the image output apparatus through the logical interface corresponding to the assigned image output apparatus constructed by said constructing means.

40. (Currently Amended) A data processing method for a data processing apparatus having a printer driver for generating print data in accordance with a print

request issued by an application program assigning the generated print data to one of a plurality of image output apparatuses and that communicates with the plurality of image output apparatuses via a network, said data processing method comprising the steps of:

limiting selection conditions of functions provided by the plurality of image output apparatuses, which are associated with printing and capable of being designated by an operator, within a range so defined that at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses satisfies a selection condition that can be designated by the operator among the limited selection conditions, the range being represented by a sum of the functions ~~each~~ provided by ~~at least~~ each respective one of plurality of image output apparatuses on the network;

controlling a display device to display the selection conditions limited by said limiting step in a form such that the operator can designate a desired selection condition; and

constructing, within the data processing apparatus, a plurality of logical interfaces, for transmitting the print data directly to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses via the network, each of the plurality of logical interfaces respectively corresponding to the plurality of image output apparatuses, wherein the generated print data is assigned to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses that is selected based on a selection condition designated by the operator and information which is stored in advance and which indicates print functions of the plurality of image output apparatuses.

41. (Previously Presented) The data processing method according to Claim 40, further comprising the steps of:

generating a plurality of lists in a case where a plurality of selection conditions are designated by the operator, the plurality of lists respectively corresponding to the plurality of designated selection conditions and each of the lists including one or more image output apparatuses satisfying the corresponding selection condition; and

selecting an image output apparatus satisfying the plurality of designated selection conditions based on the plurality of lists generated by said generating step.

42. (Previously Presented) The data processing method according to Claim 40, further comprising the steps of:

displaying a message asking the operator to designate a desired selection condition;

acquiring job control data from each of the plurality of image output apparatuses in a case where a selection condition designated by the operator designates to select an image output apparatus which completes an assigned print job in a shortest time;

predicting, for each of the plurality of image output apparatuses, a time required to complete a print job assigned thereto;

selecting an image output apparatus which will complete an assigned print job in a shortest time based on the prediction result obtained by the predicting step; and

generating a window showing a list of print-wait times with respect to each print job which has been assigned to the image output apparatus selected by the selecting step.

43. (Previously Presented) The data processing method according to Claim 40, further comprising the steps of:

assigning a print job, including the print data, to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses based on the selection condition designated by the operator;

converting the print data to conform to the image output apparatus to which the print job is assigned by said assigning step; and

transmitting the print data converted by said converting step to the image output apparatus through the logical interface corresponding to the assigned image output apparatus constructed by said constructing step.

44. (Currently Amended) A memory medium storing computer-executable process steps for a data processing method of a data processing apparatus having a printer driver for generating print data in accordance with a print request issued by an application program assigning the generated print data to one of a plurality of image output apparatuses and that communicates with the plurality of image output apparatuses via a network, said computer-executable process steps comprising the steps of:

limiting selection conditions of functions provided by the plurality of image output apparatuses, which are associated with printing and capable of being designated by an operator, within a range so defined that at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses satisfies a selection condition that can be designated by the operator among the limited selection conditions, the range being represented by a sum of the functions ~~each~~ provided by ~~at least~~ each respective one of plurality of image output apparatuses on the network;

controlling a display device to display the selection conditions limited by said limiting step in a form such that the operator can designate a desired selection condition; and

constructing, within the data processing apparatus, a plurality of logical interfaces, for transmitting the print data directly to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses via the network, each of the plurality of logical interfaces respectively corresponding to the plurality of image output apparatuses, wherein the generated print data is assigned to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses that is selected based on a selection condition designated by the operator and information which is stored in advance and which indicates print functions of the plurality of image output apparatuses.

45. (Previously Presented) The memory medium according to Claim 44, wherein the computer-executable process steps further comprise the steps of:

generating a plurality of lists in a case where a plurality of selection conditions are designated by the operator, the plurality of lists respectively corresponding to the plurality of designated selection conditions and each of the lists including one or more image output apparatuses satisfying the corresponding selection condition; and

selecting an image output apparatus satisfying the plurality of designated selection conditions based on the plurality of lists generated by said generating step.

46. (Previously Presented) The memory medium according to Claim 44, wherein the computer-executable process steps further comprise the steps of:

displaying a message asking the operator to designate a desired selection condition;

acquiring job control data from each of the plurality of image output apparatuses in a case where a selection condition designated by the operator designates to select an image output apparatus which completes an assigned print job in a shortest time;

predicting, for each of the plurality of image output apparatuses, a time required to complete a print job assigned thereto;

selecting an image output apparatus which will complete an assigned print job in a shortest time based on the prediction result obtained by the predicting step; and

generating a window showing a list of print-wait times with respect to each print job which has been assigned to the image output apparatus selected by the selecting step.

47. (Previously Presented) The memory medium according to Claim 44, wherein the computer-executable process steps further comprise the steps of:

assigning a print job, including the print data, to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses based on the selection condition designated by the operator;

converting the print data to conform to the image output apparatus to which the print job is assigned by said assigning step; and

transmitting the print data converted by said converting step to the image output apparatus through the logical interface corresponding to the assigned image output apparatus constructed by said constructing step.

48. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to Claim 36, further comprising selecting means for selecting one of the plurality of image output apparatuses based on priorities set in advance in the plurality of image output apparatuses in a case where a plurality of image output apparatuses satisfy the selection condition designated by the operator.

49. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 40, further comprising the step of selecting one of the plurality of image output apparatuses based on priorities set in advance in the plurality of image output apparatuses in a case where a plurality of image output apparatuses satisfy the selection condition designated by the operator.

50. (Currently Amended) The memory medium according to Claim 44, wherein said process steps further comprise the step of selecting one of the plurality of image output apparatuses based on priorities set in advance in the plurality of image output apparatuses in a case where a plurality of image output apparatuses satisfy the selection condition designated by the operator.